

## **Chapter Three: The Importance of Indigenous Perspectives and Technology**

Indigenous perspectives and the use of technology have profound effects on the social inclusion and exclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia. These de-homogenise and diversify the media to provide an alternative to the often negative and racist representations embedded in Australian socialisation experiences. Thus, they provide an empowering platform to educate non-Indigenous audiences to produce attitudinal and subsequent institutional changes over time...

The potential role of Indigenous run media outlets in improving social inclusion is profound and undeniable. Over time, Indigenous media outlets have been significant in “enabling self-determination”<sup>1</sup>. The introduction of satellite technology and broadcasting to Australia in the 1980’s increased the capacity of Indigenous broadcast media, allowing for knowledge, history and culture to be disseminated outside remote environments, promoting a wider understanding of Indigenous concerns<sup>2</sup>. In 2016, the majority of remote Indigenous people listened to remote Indigenous radio platforms for positive Indigenous stories (71%), followed by hearing about own community and language, an Indigenous focus, feelings of pride and support for local community<sup>3</sup>, acting as an “important part” of culture<sup>4</sup>. Not only does this highlight lack of such qualities in mainstream media, it indicates that Indigenous owned and run media outlets provide positive stories, ‘flipping the story’, engaging communities and providing the capacity for persons to tell their own stories. Furthermore, the changing role of institutions and agents of globalisation, namely communications technology, have allowed the rise of social media and the internet. These have been significantly utilised by Indigenous peoples, such as *IndigenousX* on Facebook, challenging the macro-sphere, consolidated media institution<sup>5</sup>. This is particularly pertinent as the majority of respondents (77%) to a 2018 questionnaire listed social media as one of the ways they normally access news<sup>6</sup>. Although social media is often tailored to the user’s desires, it has the profound capability to introduce persons to new ideas and beliefs due to its “huge following and audience.”<sup>7</sup>. As “it is as much about what is not reported as what is”<sup>8</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> Eddie Synot. Interviewed 26/7/2019

<sup>2</sup> Burrows, EA. (2010). *Writing to be Heard: The Indigenous Print Media’s Role in Establishing and Developing an Indigenous Public Sphere*. PhD Doctorate level. Griffith University

<sup>3</sup> First Nations Media Australia. (2016). Indigenous Communications and Media Survey 2016

<sup>4</sup> Jens Korf. Interviewed 27/7/2019

<sup>5</sup> 2019. *Indigenous Reporting on Indigenous Issues*. Content analysis

<sup>6</sup> 2018. *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the media*. Questionnaire

<sup>7</sup> Jens Korf. Interviewed 27/7/2019

<sup>8</sup> McCausland, Ruth. (2004). Special Treatment – The Representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in the Media. *Journal of Indigenous Policy*. Vol. 6, pp. 84-98

social media outlets provide a basis for Indigenous peoples to distribute their own stories, combatting the “historical exclusion and oppression of Indigenous voices” and stories, providing alternatives to homogenising and discriminatory media<sup>9</sup>.

This creates clearer pathways for fairer and more diverse representations that provide essential contextual information of unique environments, prompting greater social and cultural literacy and social cohesion in Australian society that fosters pluralism as opposed to assimilative ideologies. It additionally provides a contrasting basis to the “loud minority groups that vehemently oppose”<sup>10</sup> Indigenous rights whom are often given airtime by the media for controversy, presenting an “imbalanced view”<sup>11</sup>. Additionally, as all Generation Z respondents listed social media as one of the ways they normally access news, it is likely that the employment of communications technologies to disseminate Indigenous voices will prompt profound intergenerational change into the future.<sup>12</sup>

Technology and Indigenous perspectives in the media are evidently profoundly important to the improvement of the social inclusion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Diversified media in the 21<sup>st</sup> century offers new sources for information, often available on widely used social media sites to offer contrasting versions of events that differ from interpretations, values and motivations entrenched in the culture of mainstream and traditional media. They have the capacity to counter the issues arising from underreporting, stereotypes and racism in the media. This can counter a lack of awareness of the historical and socio-political issues over time encountered by Indigenous peoples, underpinning many of the issues reported in the media.

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<sup>9</sup> Eddie Synot. Interviewed 26/7/2019

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Jens Korf. Interviewed 27/7/2019

<sup>12</sup> 2018. *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the media*. Questionnaire